

Criteria for Inclusion in the Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric

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From The Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric

Introduction

The purpose of the [Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric](#) is to provide a stable, operational framework for the identification and analysis of Arabic rhetorical devices. The [encyclopedia's](#) scope is not to catalogue every named phenomenon in the Arabic rhetorical tradition. Accordingly, the [encyclopedia's](#) inclusion criteria ensure that each device contributes meaningfully to:

- Clear rhetorical identification,
- Linguistic analysis,
- Consistent annotation, and
- Computational or corpus-based operationalisation.

A rhetorical device is included only if it satisfies methodological standards that ensure analytical clarity, taxonomic distinctiveness, and reliable identification. The full inventory of the [encyclopedia's](#) rhetorical devices can be accessed from the [home page](#), and in derived resources such as the [Arabic Rhetorical Device Taxonomy](#), the [Arabic Rhetorical Device Identifier](#), and the [Balagha-ID app](#).

Devices that lack the necessary definitional precision, overlap extensively with broader interpretive phenomena, or cannot be annotated with reasonable reliability are not included. Exclusion does not deny a rhetorical device's historical attestation or rhetorical value. Rather, it reflects a principled commitment to taxonomic coherence and operational clarity. The [Encyclopedia](#) maintains a [list of devices which have been rejected](#), along with the reasoning for rejection.

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Live DOI

10.64393/balagha.criteria.inclusion

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Date

16 August 2026

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Criteria for Inclusion in the Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric

The **Criteria for Inclusion in the Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric** operationalise the theoretical framework established by the [Model for Rhetorical Action](#) and the [Design Principles of the Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric](#). A candidate rhetorical device must satisfy all of the following criteria for inclusion in the [Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric](#):

CATEGORY A: CLASSICAL PROVENANCE

A candidate rhetorical device must have attestation in established Arabic rhetorical theory (see [Principle 4: The Encyclopedia's Typological Foundation is the Classical Arabic Rhetorical Tradition](#)).

Criterion 1: Attestation

- To ensure the strength of the [Encyclopedia's](#) provenance, the classical Arabic rhetorical tradition must attest to the existence of a candidate rhetorical device through at least three sources.

CATEGORY B: RHETORICAL ACTION

Criteria 2–4 operationalise Steps 2–4 of the [Model for Rhetorical Action](#). Step 1 ([Communicator Intent Step](#)) is not an inclusion criterion because although communicator intent may motivate a rhetorical action, it is not a necessary condition for rhetorical action to occur and cannot ordinarily be established reliably from linguistic evidence alone.

Criterion 2: Linguistic Operation

- A candidate rhetorical device must correspond to a clearly defined and identifiable Linguistic Operation rather than only to a general communicative effect, purpose, topic, or stylistic quality (see [Principle 2: The Encyclopedia Uses a Linguistic Operation-First Approach to Rhetorical Analysis](#) and [Principle 3: The Encyclopedia Views Rhetorical Devices As Atomic Units](#)).

Criterion 3: Cognitive Relationship

- A candidate rhetorical device must be capable, through its Linguistic Operation, of establishing or activating one or more communicatively relevant Cognitive Relationships for the [addressee](#) between concepts, meanings, expressions, sounds, structures, assumptions, or other elements

- between concepts, meanings, expressions, sounds, structures, assumptions, or other elements of the discourse, through which the Linguistic Operation can acquire rhetorical significance.
- Such Cognitive Relationships may be semantic, conceptual, formal, structural, phonological, or otherwise linguistic according to the nature of the Linguistic Operation. Mere perception of a linguistic feature or incidental regularity is not sufficient; the relationship must be capable of supporting Communicative Enhancement.

Criterion 4: Communicative Enhancement

- A candidate rhetorical device must be capable, through the Cognitive Relationship established or activated by its Linguistic Operation, of contributing to the enhancement of one or more identifiable [communicative effects](#) in the [addressee](#).
- The Communicative Enhancement need not correspond to demonstrable Communicator Intent, and a particular occurrence need not demonstrably produce the enhancement in every [addressee](#).

CATEGORY C: AMENABLE TO OPERATIONALISATION

Criterion 5: Taxonomic distinctiveness

- A candidate rhetorical device must be sufficiently distinct from existing devices in its Linguistic Operation to justify an independent taxonomic position.
- A difference only in Cognitive Relationship, the particular communicative effect enhanced, or Communicator Intent is not sufficient to establish a separate rhetorical device where the underlying Linguistic Operation is the same.

Criterion 6: Operationally identifiable

- The attested definitions, descriptions, and examples of a candidate rhetorical device must provide sufficient evidence for the [Encyclopedia](#) to derive stable operational recognition criteria, including through [Controlled Abstraction](#) where necessary, such that independent analysts can identify and annotate instances of the device consistently.

See Also

- [Model for Rhetorical Action](#) - establishes the theoretical model of rhetorical action operationalised by these criteria.
- [Design Principles of the Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric](#) - outlines the [Encyclopedia](#)'s design principles through which the [Model for Rhetorical Action](#) is applied to the organisation of rhetorical devices.

Page History

- 2026-08-16 - Page created: [Criteria for Inclusion in the Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric](#) by splitting from [Design Principles of the Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric](#).

Category: [Encyclopedia Pages](#)

Cite this page: Dr Mandar Marathe  (2026). "Criteria for Inclusion in the Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric". *al-Balagha.com: The Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric*. <https://doi.org/10.64393/balagha.criteria.inclusion>

This page was last edited on 2 September 2026, at 22:44.

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